COMMUNICATION | PROSPECTING | SALES | SKILLS

How to write an effective cold calling script

If the thought of cold calling makes chills run up and down your sales spine— or actually freezes you— here's a hit list of proven, practical practices, tips and techniques from the woman they call the "Queen of Cold Calling."

by **Wendy Weiss**

plus AUDIO and ATTACHMENT

1975 words | 8 pages

Many people think they can just "wing it" or they "know what they want to say." On the telephone, however, you have 10 seconds to grab and hold your prospect's attention and frequently you don't get a second chance. Ten seconds goes by very quickly.

> ***Your first impression has to be strong enough to carry you through the rest of your pitch.***

"Winging it" is risky and just generally doesn't work, and "knowing what you want to say" without having actually crafted your message and practiced it can easily turn into "gee, I didn't say that very well..."

Like the Girl Scouts, it is better to be prepared. A good script, a well-thought-out presentation that says what you want to say, precisely and succinctly, yet that still gives you room to maneuver, is one of the keys to a successful telephone pitch. This is about communication and about being prepared. In writing your script you are crafting a message and focusing your message to your prospect. Your goal with your script is for your prospect to hear you and for your prospect to get "hooked."

So what makes a good script? Write your script the way you talk— and

get to the point! Written language and spoken language are very different. If your script is in written language you will sound phony. Real people do not speak with capital letters at the start of sentences and periods at the end. People actually speak more in phrases or fragments, with pauses, sometimes improper grammar and the occasional ah or um... It is imperative that you sound real, so if you are having a difficult time with this, try talking into a tape recorder, then playing it back and writing down what you say.

Don't bother asking your prospect "how are you today?" or "may I have a moment of your time?" or anything else. Start by asking for your prospect by name. Then greet your prospect by name. Next, introduce yourself. "My name is (your name goes here), my company is (your company name goes here)" or "My name is (your name goes here), I'm with (your company name goes here)."

Then you want a sound bite to further introduce yourself.

> ***A sound bite is one sentence that expresses simply and succinctly what you do (or what is your product or service).***

Example: Wendy Weiss teaches people to get what they want over the telephone.

Your sound bite, or the following line, should position you as the expert—someone (company, product or service) who stands out from the pack. If you do this well you will preempt the objection:
"I can't meet with every salesperson who calls." You will not be "every salesperson who calls." To do this, you cannot say the same things that everyone else is saying-so be creative! When I started my business there were many others providing similar services representing companies, making calls and setting new business appointments for sales representatives. Generally these people worked in-house, were not particularly well paid and were called telemarketers. Even this early in my career I knew I was not a telemarketer. I decided I was a Marketing Consultant Specializing in New Business Development. This put me in a

different category altogether. I was the expert, the outside consultant hired to help develop new business.

Find a way to set yourself up as the expert. You can use phrases like "we specialize in..." or "our reputation is..." "we are known for..." You can also name-drop credentials to help this positioning. Mention clients or customers in similar businesses as your prospect. This does two things: it lets your prospect know that you are familiar with their industry and it will also make your prospect feel safer if they have not heard of you before. In addition, if someone has referred you, this is a good place to drop his or her name.

Next is the heart of the script. Describe your product or service, pointing out relevant benefits.

> ***Remember-your prospects are interested in benefits. Remember also your prospects will buy for their reasons, not yours.***

That is why it is important to do your research and have a sense of what your prospect may need and may be interested in.

Focus your message to your prospect and speak in their language. If your industry has a particular jargon— don't they all?— use it. You cannot be the expert if you do not know the language. If, however, you are in an industry that has a jargon, but your prospect doesn't know or use that jargon— speak plainly! Your intent here is communication. You want to be understood! This part of your script does not need to be long and unwieldy— a few salient points will do. You can bolster this section with a success story, something you, your company or product did for a customer. How you saved them money, or saved them time or saved the day when they were in a tight spot. By inference, this will mean that you will do the same for your prospect. It is a terrific way of pointing out customer benefits without actually having to say "and the benefit to you, Ms. Prospect, is..." You might have several different success stories that you use depending on the type of lead on which you are working.

Your script is fluid. How your conversation with your prospect proceeds will determine what parts of your script you will use. So make sure to leave some maneuvering room in your script so that if you need to change tactics, for example tell a different success story, you can easily do it. You make sure that you have maneuvering room by being prepared, knowing your customer benefits and knowing which customer benefits may interest a particular prospect. Also have several success stories that you can use depending on the point you are trying to make. And please, don't be afraid to say the unexpected or to use humor.

Then the close. Here it is... Ask for what you want! All your hard work is worth nothing if you do not ask for what you want. Do not expect that your prospect will know what you want, or guess what you want, or offer what you want... It is your job to ask, clearly and precisely.

So, what do you want? Most would probably answer that you want to turn your prospect into your customer.

> ***You want your prospect to buy your product or service. That's all true, but that comes later. What you want now is to get your "foot in the door."***

You want to introduce yourself, your product and/or your company so that later the prospect can be induced to buy. If your prospect does not know you, is not familiar with your product or service, they will never buy it. They have to know you exist before they will even consider making that purchase! Therefore what you want now is an appointment. At this moment you are not selling your product or your service, you are selling an appointment and only an appointment. You want the prospect to give you 10 to 15 minutes of their time, so that you can introduce yourself, your company, your product, your service—that is it! You are not asking her to buy anything or change anything that she does-only to meet with you.

If you think about the appointment in this manner, you will also realize that almost any objection to a meeting that your prospect may voice is

then largely irrelevant. Perhaps your prospect already has a vendor that provides a similar product or service. So what. None of us can predict the future. The situation could change. Besides, you're not asking that she buy anything, you want to meet with her and introduce yourself. Period! Perhaps your prospect doesn't use a similar product or service and says she has no need. She doesn't need it; she will never need it. So what. None of us can predict the future, anything is possible, and one day perhaps she may. Now I am not suggesting that you spend your time setting up meetings with people who do not need your product or service, but what I am saying is that the qualification is on your part, you actually need to decide if you want to meet this prospect. Is this prospect worth your time and energy?

Ask for an appointment— ask for a meeting. I generally like the word "meeting" better than "appointment." It has more weight and substance. Say: "I would like to meet with you," "I would like to introduce myself, my company, my product..." "I need 10 minutes of your time."

> ***Be clear, be bold, be to the point. Give them some choices of times: "Is this Thursday good or would next Thursday be better?"***

It is easier for your prospect to choose between options, such as different dates, than to decide whether and if to schedule.

Once you have scheduled the meeting, make sure that you confirm the prospect's name, title, and address. Also make sure she has your name, your company name and telephone number! Repeat the date and time of the meeting at least twice. You want to make sure that you are both talking about the same date. In addition, as you give your prospect your name etc. and when you repeat the meeting date and time use your voice to direct your prospect to write everything down. Speak s-l-o-w-l-y and distinctly at a pace that they can write. Your prospect will interpret this way of speaking as a direction to write. This way they too will have the meeting in their calendar and there should be no mix-ups.

The Script Formula

Ask for the prospect by name.

Say hello. "Hi! Ms. Prospect" or "Hi Jane."

Identify yourself and your company. "My name is _____. My company is _____."

Say what you do (sound bite). Position yourself as the expert. Use phrases like "we specialize in..." or "our reputation is..." "we are known for..." You can also do some name dropping of credentials here.

Articulate benefits. Success stories are a terrific way to point out benefits.

Ask for what you want-an introductory meeting. "I would like to meet with you..." "I would like to introduce myself, my company, my product..." "I need 10 minutes of your time." "Is this Thursday good or would next Thursday be better?"

Keep asking for what you want!

Wendy Weiss, sales trainer, sales coach and author is known as the "Queen of Cold Calling". She helps entrepreneurs, business owners and sales professionals gain confidence, reach more prospects, close more sales and make more money. She started her business 15 years ago, representing clients on the telephone and setting new business appointments. While Wendy no longer “dials for dollars” (except for her own business), all of her workshops, seminars, products and individual sales coaching are based on practical, real-life, hands-on experience.

Wendy has trained thousands of sales professionals and entrepreneurs in the techniques that she developed. Her clients include Avon Products Inc., Arbonne International, Nikken and thousands of entrepreneurs throughout the
country.

Wendy has been featured in *BusinessWeek, Entrepreneur Magazine, Selling Power, Target Marketing* and various other business and sales publications.

Wendy is the author of *Cold Calling College* and *Cold Calling for Women: Opening Doors & Closing Sales* (reviewed in this issue). To subscribe to Wendy's e-mail newsletter, *Opening Doors & Closing Sales,* which has an international readership and her columns are syndicated to 168 different print and Internet publications, use our affiliate link here:

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Totally terminating telephone terror

Have you ever been guilty of trying to do anything... anything... *instead of picking up the phone and calling a prospect? You're not alone. And, there is hope.*

by **Wendy Weiss**

approximately 20 minute downloadable MP3

If you've ever experienced the '10 ton" phone or had negative expectations about making cold calls, Wendy's warm and honest, professional approach will be a breath of fresh air. From ballet dancer to successful telemarketer, the "Queen of Cold Calling" surprise you with her wit and wisdom, tips, tools and techniques and her "If I can do it, you can do it" coaching. "It's not how much you know," Wendy says. "it's how much you do". And the three keys she gives you are pure prospecting gold.

ATTACHMENT

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT | SALES |

Sales tips I learned from my cat

Some people learned everything the ever needed to know in kindergarten. Others take formal courses at university or various trainings. The dean of the College of Cold Calling has a different take and twist on fun-learning. Here...

by **Wendy Weiss**

370 words | 2 pages